

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 ACDA-19 AF-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 EB-11

DRC-01 /153 W

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R 161702Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4840

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, XF, UK, IS

SUBJECT: UK PRESS REACTION TO U.S. RESUPPLY OF ARMS
TO ISRAEL

SUMMARY: ALL LONDON NEWSPAPERS OCTOBER 16 GAVE HEAVY
FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE TO U.S. RESUPPLY OF ARMS TO ISRAEL.

RADIO AND TV ALSO CARRY LONG REPORTS. EDITORIAL COMMENT
IS LIMITED BUT GENERAL TONE OF REPORTING IS THAT U.S.

ACTION LIKELY TO HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. TYPICAL

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HEADLINE CHARACTERIZES EFFORT AS "U.S. POURING ARMS INTO
ISRAEL". ALL ARTICLES REPORT THAT U.S. FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

BEING PROVIDED TO ISRAEL. ALL REPORTS NOTE THAT U.S. ACTION IS TO COUNTERBALANCE RUSSIAN RESUPPLY OF ARABS BUT THIS ASPECT OF STORY RECEIVES LESS EMPHASIS THAN SERIOUS NATURE OF U.S. DECISION. END SUMMARY.

1. ALL LONDON NEWSPAPERS OF OCTOBER 16 LEAD WITH STORY OF U.S. RESUPPLY OF ARMS TO ISRAEL. RADIO AND TV NEWS AND COMMENTARY PROGRAMS ALSO GIVE PRIORITY TO STORY. MEDIA COVERAGE CHARACTERIZES U.S. EFFORT AS MASSIVE. HEAVY EMPHASIS IS GIVEN TO REPORTS THAT OPERATION IS BEING CONDUCTED BY "U.S. AIR ARMADA" AND THAT EQUIPMENT INCLUDES FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. SOME NEWSPAPERS CARRY SEVERAL ARTICLES ON THIS SUBJECT COMPLETELY OVERSHADOWING COVERAGE GIVEN TO DEVELOPING CONTROVERSY OVER UK ARMS EMBARGO (TO BE REPORTED SEPTEL). EVEN POPULAR PRESS, WHICH USUALLY CARRIES ONLY CRIME AND SCANDAL ON FRONT PAGES, GIVES MAXIMUM PLAY TO U.S. ACTION.
2. NEWS MEDIA HAVE NOT BEGUN TO CARRY EDITORIAL COMMENT (EXCEPT "DAILY TELEGRAPH" -- SEE BELOW) BUT NEWS COVERAGE SEEMS CALCULATED TO CREATE ALARM ABOUT MASSIVE NATURE OF U.S. RESUPPLY PROGRAM. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE TV PROGRAM ON OCTOBER 15 INCLUDED CLIP OF USAF C-5 AIRCRAFT OFFLOADING TANKS AND COULD HAVE LEFT IMPRESSION THAT THIS WAS PART OF ISRAEL RESUPPLY (ALTHOUGH CLIP WAS LABELED AS U.S. FILM AND NOT CURRENT COVERAGE).
3. ALL REPORTS INCLUDE FACT THAT U.S. IS MOUNTING RESUPPLY IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN ASSISTANCE TO ARABS BUT REPORTING ON RUSSIAN EFFORT IS NOT EMPHASIZED.
4. MEETING OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENT WITH U.S. AIRLINES ON POSSIBLE USE OF CIVIL AIRCRAFT FOR AIRLIFT TO ISRAEL IS HIGHLIGHTED IN MOST PAPERS.
5. EXAMPLES OF PRESS COVERAGE. "GUARDIAN" CARRIES THREE LONG ARTICLES ON RESUPPLY INCLUDING REPORT ON SENATOR JACKSON'S CRITICISM OF ADMINISTRATION FOR SLOW RESPONSE TO ISRAEL'S NEEDS. CONSERVATIVE "DAILY TELEGRAPH" HAD FOUR STORIES AND ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT THUS FAR. EDITORIAL WAS FAVORABLE TO U.S. SUPPORT FOR BELEAGUED "DEMOCRATIC ISRAEL". TWO "TELEGRAPH" STORIES REPORTED U.S. AIRCRAFT PRESUMABLY EN ROUTE ISRAEL LANDING AT AZORES EVERY FIFTEEN MINUTES.

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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"FINANCIAL TIMES" SAYS RESUPPLY MARKS AT LEAST TEMPORARY

HALT IN NIXON ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A

NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. "TIMES" IS ONLY PAPER WHICH

GIVES HEAVY EMPHASIS IN TOP HEADLINE TO FACT THAT U.S.

ACTION IS TO "REDRESS RUSSIA'S MASSIVE AIRLIFT."

POPULAR PAPER "THE SUN" BANNER HEADLINES "THE CRUNCH"

AS "AMERICA THREW DOWN THE GAUNTLET TO RUSSIA OVER ARMS
FOR THE MIDEAST."

6. EXAMPLES FROM BBC COVERAGE. ON BBC 2 JOHN HUMPHRIES

SAID "WITH ITS (U.S.) HEAVY RELIANCE ON ARAB OIL AND

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CONCERN TO PRESERVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION,

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN DESPERATELY

ANXIOUS TO AVOID THIS KIND OF INVOLVEMENT". ANGUS

MCDERMID REPORTED THAT THE U.S. WAS SUPPLYING ARMS TO ISRAEL THOUGH "... THIS HAD BEEN AN EMBARRASSING DECISION FOR PRESIDENT NIXON TO MAKE". HE NOTED THAT SEVERAL HUNDRED AIRCRAFT WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN SENT THROUGH THE AZORES. ON BBC'S WEEKLY "PANORAMA", JULIAN PETTIFER ALLOTTED ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES(OF A FIFTY MINUTE ROUNDUP ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR) TO THE U.S. DECISION WITH COMMENTARY THAT WAS SLANTED TOWARD ARAB POSITION.

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